

MBTA COMMUNITIES

ZONING FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON



& Transportation

Why build multi-family housing near MBTA public transit?

Building multi-family housing near public transit makes housing more accessible to those who may not be able to afford a car or prefer not to use one. It also encourages walkable and bikeable neighborhoods where residents can access daily needs, like local shops, jobs, schools, restaurants, parks, etc. Housing near transit reduces the need to use a car for short trips, which can **reduce** traffic congestion, decrease carbon emissions, and improve air quality. It also stimulates economic activity by creating more opportunities for people to shop at Arlington's local businesses.

Why isn't our proposed zoning district near the Alewife Red Line MBTA Station?

Much of the area surrounding the Alewife Red Line MBTA Station is located in a floodplain. The Working Group wished to avoid floodplains in the overlay and the results of its Spring survey showed that the community held the same desire. The State reclassified Arlington as an Adjacent Community because it has less than 100 acres of developable land near a rapid transit station. The Town's proposed zoning districts are located along MBTA bus routes that connect directly to MBTA Rapid Transit Stations on the Green and Red Lines, including the Alewife, Davis, Porter, Union Square, and Lechmere stations.

What public transportation is located near the proposed zoning districts?

Multiple MBTA bus routes run adjacent to the proposed zoning districts on Mass Ave and Broadway, and will provide high to medium service frequency as part of the MBTA Bus Network Redesign. Route 77 will provide daily service from Arlington Heights to the Harvard Square Red Line Station via Massachusetts Avenue every 15 minutes or better from 5:00 am to 1:00 am. Route 87 will run daily from Arlington Center to the Lechmere Green Line Station via Broadway every 60 minutes or better from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm. Routes 67 and 62 will also provide service to the Alewife Red Line Station via Mass Ave, Park Ave, and Route 2 at varying frequencies.

What is the Town doing to improve MBTA bus service?

The Town is advocating for increased MBTA service while retrofitting our own roadways to improve the efficiency of bus routes. Arlington is currently working with the MBTA to install Transit Signal Priority (TSP) equipment at intersections along Mass Ave that will detect approaching buses and keep the signal green longer so they can pass through, resulting in improved travel times and increased reliability. The MBTA has also made progress hiring more bus operators to support the increased frequency projected in the [Bus Network Redesign](#). The quality and frequency of MBTA bus service has varied over time, but the Town is actively working with the MBTA to plan gradual improvements to bus service for the future.



For more information about the MBTA Communities process, visit
tinyurl.com/MBTACommunitiesArlington

Will there be increased traffic congestion and worsened parking availability?

Housing in transit-friendly, bikeable, and walkable neighborhoods encourages people to drive less because almost all daily needs can be met without a vehicle. By supporting those who would like to walk, bike, or take transit, the Town can manage traffic congestion by providing reliable alternatives to the car to ensure people and goods are able to move about with minimal trip delays.

What is the Town doing to make walking and biking more appealing to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips?

The [Connect Arlington – Sustainable Transportation Plan](#) has as vision for the Town to create a pedestrian first, walk-friendly environment along with a low-stress bicycle network. Arlington’s Sidewalk Improvement Program is working to ensure that the Town’s pedestrian network is safe, connected, and proactively maintained. Efforts are also underway to develop a highly connected network of dedicated bike lanes to encourage bicyclists of varying levels of experience and comfort to move around. The [Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project](#) also includes recommendations to improve the Bikeway so that it is a safe, pleasant, and low-stress path for all ages and abilities. These planning documents will be implemented over time and future projects will help incentivize walking and biking over single-occupancy vehicle trips.



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